



EDUCATION MINNESOTA WORTHINGTON 7291

Oct. 15, 2019

JODI HANSEN
PRESIDENT

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TREASURER

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SECRETARY

John Landgaard, superintendent
Brad Shaffer, school board chair
Linden Olson, school board member
Lori Dudley, school board member
Steve Schnieder, school board member
Joel Lorenz, school board member
Mike Harberts, school board member
Adam Blume, school board member
1117 Marine Ave.
Worthington, MN 56187

Superintendent Landgaard and school board members,

All Worthington students, regardless of immigration status or country of origin, must be treated with dignity and feel welcome in our school district. It's unacceptable for anyone working with our children to treat them any other way.

That's why members of Education Minnesota Worthington 7291 found a Sept. 22 article in the Washington Post featuring a Worthington school bus driver so shocking. In the article, Don Brink told a reporter he wishes Worthington would have another ICE raid, because "they need to get rid of the illegals."

The fear of federal agents tearing families apart is traumatizing for the children we nurture every day in our schools. Many of us still remember the shock and terror families experienced in 2006 when federal immigration officials raided the Swift pork processing plant. More than 200 workers were arrested. Children of immigrant families didn't come to schools for days.

That fear, along with the perpetuation of false and damaging stereotypes of immigrants, has lasting effects on our children. Educators understand that our immigrant students' success is far too often at the mercy of our country's broken immigration system and the fear mongering that goes along with it.

While the school district doesn't employ bus drivers – it contracts with Bud's Bus Service – we urge you to renegotiate the district's contract with the company to include a paraprofessional on every bus. An additional adult to manage and monitor students will allow the drivers to focus on driving and keeping students physically safe. Educators also believe the district should provide cultural responsiveness training to bus drivers transporting our students, just as it does for its own employees.

Worthington educators stand with all of our students. Anyone who doesn't make each child feel supported and valued has no business working in our school district, and that must include employees of contractors working with our students.

Sincerely,

Education Minnesota Worthington Social Justice Sub-Committee,
on behalf of Education Minnesota Worthington 7291